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## **Agriculture News Release - 1993-09-23a**

United States. Congress. House. Committee on Agriculture

E. De la Garza

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# news release

**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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Washington, DC 20515

(NR93-076)

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## **COMMITTEE APPROVES GRAIN INSPECTION BILL**

For immediate release, Thursday, Sept. 23, 1993

WASHINGTON -- The House Agriculture Committee approved legislation Wednesday that would reauthorize and improve Federal grain inspection activities, announced Committee Chairman Kika de la Garza, D-Texas.

H.R. 2689, the U.S. Grain Standards Act Amendment of 1993, would reauthorize and amend the legislative authority for the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). FGIS administers a nationwide system to assure integrity in the inspection, weighing and handling of U.S. grains in domestic and export trade.

"This legislation will ensure that FGIS continues to have the legislative authority it needs to charge fees for the services it provides the grain industry. The bill also makes several improvements to streamline the agency's operations and cut agency costs," said Rep. de la Garza.

"This bill also continues our self-initiated goal of eliminating male-specific references, such as 'he' and 'his', that appear in many of our agricultural laws. We must recognize that an administrator or a director of a Federal agency is as likely to be a female as male today. I believe sexist language in our laws is an affront to the dignity of all people," added Rep. de la Garza.

"The farmers who produce this nation's abundant harvest and the grain marketing system that delivers these harvests to our customers -- domestic and foreign -- want to be assured that Federal grain standards are administered in a fair, common-sense manner that maintains consumer confidence in America's grain commodities. Our action here will help make certain that FGIS has the necessary authorities to continue meeting its responsibilities to maintain the integrity and quality of the U.S. grain supply," said Rep. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., the Committee's Ranking Minority Member.

Key provisions of H.R. 2689, as approved by the full Committee, would:

- Extend FGIS authority for 5 years to collect fees for weighing and inspection of grain (sufficient to cover costs including administrative and supervisory costs).
- Authorize annual appropriations over the next 5 years to cover the costs of non-fee based standardization and compliance, inspection and weighing, and other activities.
- Authorize FGIS to collect fees for the use of its equipment and services by entities not involved in the grain industry.
- Allow FGIS to issue inspector licenses to individuals supervised under a contractual arrangement with official or designated state agencies.
- Increase the criminal penalties for first-time violators who knowingly engage in prohibited acts.
- Reduce paperwork by eliminating the current quarterly report to Congress on official complaints.
- Require the establishment of pilot programs under which individual geographic areas may be served by more than one official inspection agency (current law requires that only one agency may be designated for a given geographic area).
- Eliminate all gender-specific references from the U.S. Grain Standards Act.
- Limit the value of any mementos offered or received by an FGIS employee who meets with an official representative of a foreign government to no more than \$20.

The Committee agreed to delete a provision adopted during subcommittee action that would have written into law a prohibition on grain handlers' adding water to grain, except for milling, malting, processing, pest control practices or FGIS-approved conditions. This issue is currently being addressed through the agency's rule-making process and is expected to be the subject of a future hearing at the subcommittee level.